

REMARKS

Claims 1-55 were pending, with claims 37-55 having been withdrawn from consideration and claims 1-36 having been elected with traverse for examination on the merits.

Applicants are grateful for the Examiner's indication that claims 1-36 are allowable over the prior art.

Thus, to expedite prosecution, Applicants have cancelled claims 37-55 without prejudice to pursue in a future application. Thus, claims 1-36 are pending.

The Examiner has maintained that claims 1-36 are indefinite. For the reasons set forth in the previous response, Applicants respectfully disagree. However, since the changes proposed by the Examiner do not affect the scope of Applicants' claims (i.e., does not narrow it), Applicants, in the interest of expediting allowance and not for any reasons related to patentability, thus amend the claims as per the Examiner's suggestions.

Specifically, claims 1, 7, 16, 27 and 32 were amended to replace the term metal "carbide" with metal "compound" as suggested by the Examiner. Claims 5, 14 and 25 were amended to correct the antecedent basis accordingly by deleting the phrase "by weight total carbides" as suggested by the Examiner.

As such, Applicants respectfully submit that pending claims 1-36 are all in the condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

No additional fees are believed due. However, if any additional fees are necessary, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0540.

If there are any outstanding issues which would prevent the issuance of a Notice of Allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the Applicants' undersigned counsel for a telephone interview.

Dated: December 23, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

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